

HAWORTH MEDIA

Consumer Connection Series

Transitioning From a Performance-Only Marketer

February 2026

INTRODUCTION

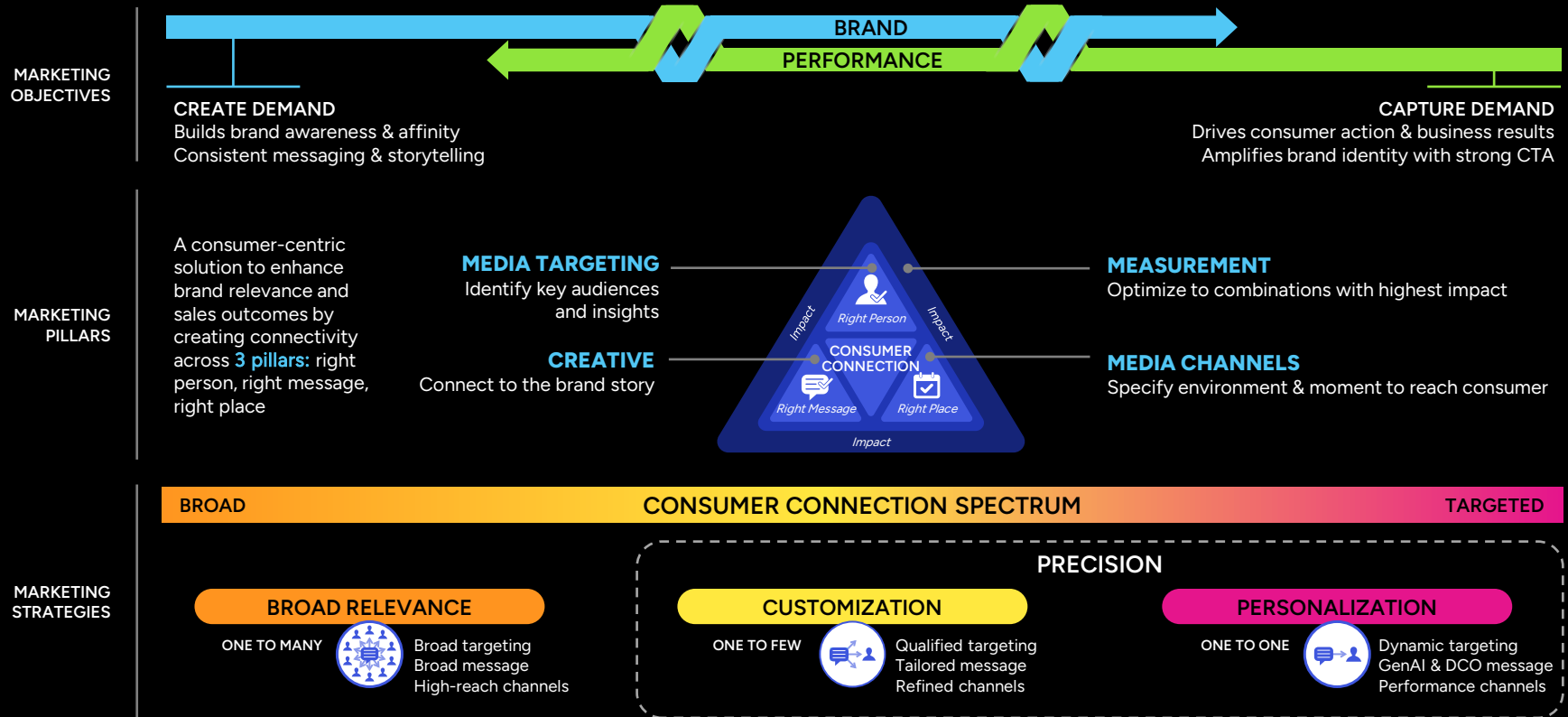
Creating a truly integrated Brand + Performance marketing program remains a persistent challenge facing brands today. While the importance of Brand + Performance integration is widely understood, the path to achieving often seems complicated and unclear—requiring coordination across audiences, creative, media, and measurement. When done well, success is driven by strong audience intelligence, enabling technology, and disciplined test-and-learn.

The **Consumer Connection Series** is designed to bring clarity to that path. Drawing on Haworth's experience partnering with brands at different stages of growth, the series explores the key phases, challenges, and decisions required to build more connected, effective marketing across the Brand + Performance spectrum. Each installment focuses on moments in that journey and marketing evaluations, outlining practical frameworks and solutions to help brands progress toward measurable, scalable growth.

This first topic—**Transitioning from a Performance-Only Marketer**—sets the foundation, examining how brands move beyond short-term performance gains to unlock sustained impact through more connected brand and performance strategies.

Grounding in **The Consumer Connection**: Enhancing Relevance and Advancing Outcomes Across the Consumer Experience

As we work with clients to build integrated Brand + Performance advertising programs, our Consumer Connection framework serves as a simple yet powerful tool for stakeholder alignment. It helps teams navigate the many elements of connected advertising and understand how strategies shift across the brand and performance spectrum.



Transitioning from a Performance-Only Marketer

Recognizing the Stages and Taking Action

Haworth has worked with a number of early-stage growth brands that come to us as returns begin to underdeliver and growth expectations fall short. Our approach starts with optimizing performance programs to their full potential, followed by close monitoring for signs of diminishing returns.

Stage 1

Initial Performance Headroom

Start-ups and emerging brands often achieve efficient, early growth with a performance-first approach, supported by significant initial headroom.

Actions

Optimize and scale

Stage 2

Performance Plateau

Over time, the initial performance headroom that fueled early growth begins to erode. As a result, this performance-first approach leads to a “performance plateau,” where growth slows and returns diminish.

Monitor data signals

Stage 3

Brand Layer

To sustain momentum, brands need to layer in brand advertising as performance gains begin to moderate, creating new demand and strengthening long-term efficiency.

Test, learn & scale

Adding the Brand Layer: Orchestrating Brand + Performance to Maximize the Impact

There is plenty of research indicating an optimal mix of 60-70% brand and 30-40% performance. The research is not wrong, but this shift isn't one to make overnight. Brand marketing requires greater investment—driven by broader reach and higher production demands—and delivers returns over a longer time horizon as it primes audiences beyond immediate in-market demand.

We guide clients through a data-driven, measurable, and iterative approach to making this transition.



1. FLIGHTING & STRATEGY

Sequenced Brand + Performance Media Maximizing the Combined Impact

We flight Brand Media to build momentum ahead of Performance, priming consumers and creating a lift that performance media can capitalize on. The result is stronger efficiency and greater scale during peak demand periods.

BEST PRACTICES

1. Brand sets the stage.

Because brand impact has a roughly six-week "half-life," keeping brand media active leading into performance periods lowers CPAs and increases responsiveness during high-intent window.

2. Performance harvests demand.

Performance media should follow or overlap with brand, converting the audience already warmed by brand exposure. This sequencing benefits from a "brand lift tail"

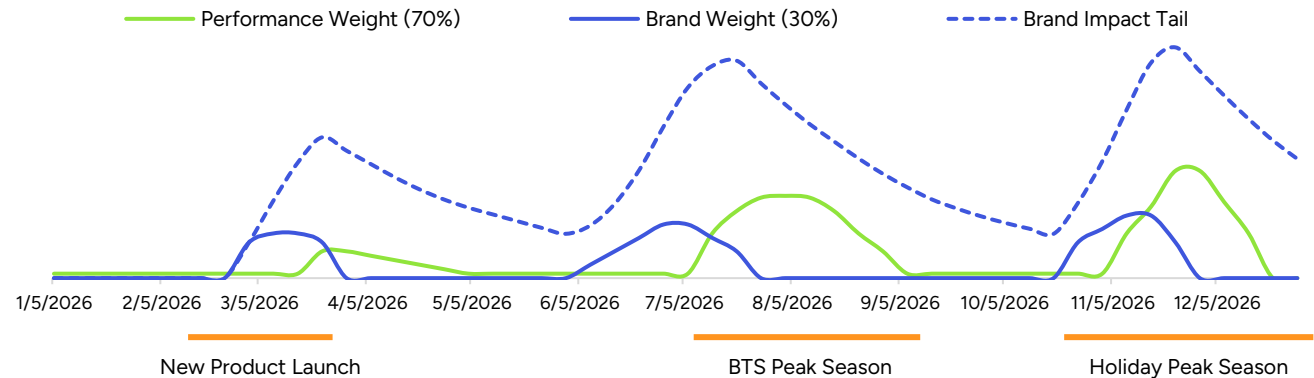
3. Avoid long gaps.

To maintain synergy, avoid breaks longer than ~6 weeks between meaningful brand exposure and performance pushes.

4. Plan around key moments.

For peak seasonal windows or new launches/innovations, ensure brand effects are near peak heading into heavy performance periods, allowing performance tactics to work harder and scale more efficiently.

This example shows three seasonal pushes with always on performance. As a result, the impact from brand marketing builds to a peak during priority holiday season.



2. AUDIENCE ACTIVATION

A Connected Audience Construct Flowing Through the Customer Journey

We construct profiles, segments, and signals that drive response and guide customers through the journey. Powered by a connected audience data foundation, our **Audience IQ** platform centralizes 1P and 3P data to unify strategy, audience development, and targeting approaches. It uncovers high-value segments and enables smarter, more consistent cross-channel activation, including seamless integration with client CDPs.

Example of how this comes to life.



BRAND

LONG-TERM PROSPECT

Multiple Demo + Psychographic Segments
1PD LAL of High Value Customer Segments
Adjacent Category Buyers

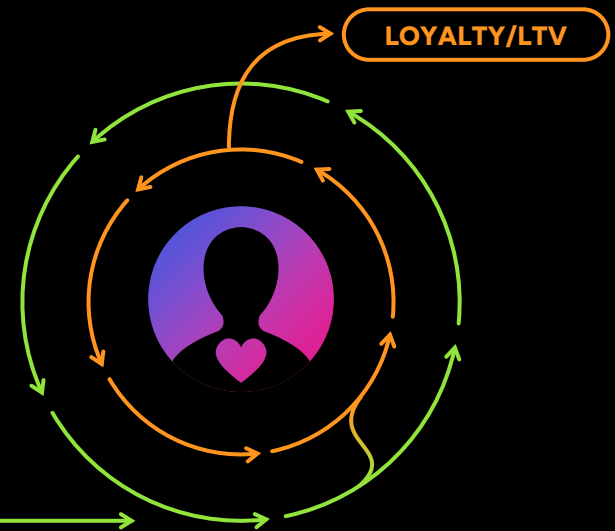
PERFORMANCE

IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS

Intent Signals
Contextual
Site Retargeting
Remarketing Brand Media Engagers

CURRENT CUSTOMERS

Enriched Customer Profiles
Predictive Signs of Churn / Lapse



3. MEASUREMENT ARCHITECTURE

A Test & Learn Measurement Plan Guiding Where to Shift + Scale

Every industry and client is going to look a little different. This example is for a growth brand in the consumer electronics category sold through DTC ecommerce and online retailers, with annual media budget of \$5M - \$10M. Together, these three measurement solutions form a unified system—providing both the tactical clarity needed for in-market optimization and the strategic rigor required for long-term investment planning.

RETAIL MEDIA PARTNER ATTRIBUTION

Optimizes day-to-day activation

- Partners like Amazon & Walmart Connect offer closed-loop attribution with robust offsite inventory across CTV, OLV and display, making them great incubators for testing the sales impact of flexing upper-funnel impressions
- Adding incrementality tests and demand forecasts indicates how to maximize profitable growth across retailers

CROSS-CHANNEL ATTRIBUTION

Connects all channels + quantifies synergy

- Sales and conversion KPIs tracked at the placement, audience, and creative level enable optimization across every element of the Consumer Connection
- Delivers journey-level insights—including conversion paths, brand halo effects on performance KPIs, and time-to-conversion—revealing how Brand and Performance work together

MARKETING MIX MODELING

Guides long-term brand-performance investment strategy

- All media placements are mapped to objective to capture the sales impact across Brand & Performance
- Demand curves reveal where scale peaks and diminishing returns begin—fueling forecasts on where each incremental dollar delivers the strongest projected return to drive profitable, scalable growth

How We Are Advancing Clients From Performance-Led Growth to Scalable Impact

UNDER THE RADAR BRAND IN OUTDOOR LIVING CATEGORY



Multi-Year Evolution From Performance to Innovation Launch to Growth Planning

- Delivered rapid performance media improvements while forecasting incremental demand across retail partners
- Developed a full-funnel go-to-market strategy for new product launch, supported by market-level analysis and test plans
- Applied advanced data modeling to forecast feasibility and budget requirements for multi-year market share growth

CHALLENGER BRAND IN HEALTH & BEAUTY CATEGORY



Strategic Rollout of Brand Media as Performance Media Plateaus

- Added Brand media, strategically flighted with retail media programs to support key innovation moments
- Deployed MMM to assess diminishing returns and optimize Brand + Performance mix
- Currently advancing testing plan to further measure & validate the sales impact of Brand investment

GROWTH BRAND IN THE BEVERAGE CATEGORY



Investment to Accelerate Awareness & Affinity as Growth from Distribution Slowed

- Diversified the media mix to drive incremental reach
- Shifted spend from over-saturated channels into higher-attention placements and partnerships (validated by MMM)
- Deployed an additional flight between peak seasons to avoid long gaps and mitigate awareness decay
- Drove notable lift in brand KPIs and growth in incremental sales volume without sacrificing ROI

HAWORTH MEDIA

What to learn how Haworth can help your brand grow?
[Contact us](#) for a free performance audit & brand assessment.